

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL  
REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ECONOMY AND EXECUTIVE  
DATE OF MEETING: 5 MARCH 2015 & 17 MARCH 2015  
REPORT OF: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PUBLIC REALM  
TITLE: MANAGEMENT OF CAPITAL SPENDING ON THE WATERWAYS**

**Is this a Key Decision?**

**NO**

One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

**Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Executive

**1 What is the report about?**

- 1.1 To authorise the reassigning of approved capital budgets relating to repairs on the canal and waterways in order to respond to urgent maintenance and repair priorities.

**2 Recommendations:**

- 2.1 That any funds remaining from the capital allocation for the repair to the Turf Lock gates be reassigned to other necessary and urgent repairs on the canal and waterway;
- 2.2 That the Assistant Director Public Realm in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture and the Assistant Director Finance be delegated authority to reassign any residue from any future capital funding for the waterway in order to effect immediate and or significant repairs elsewhere in the canal or quays. Local Councillors will be advised and variations will be reported in the Capital Budget update reports.

**3 Reasons for the recommendation:**

- 3.1 The capital bidding process does not lend itself to the immediacy of substantial repair issues that manifest themselves on the waterways. A leak in the canal can be calamitous but may not necessarily be apparent until the structure is at risk of an imminent breach. Recent inspections have identified an estimated £55,000 of urgent but currently unbudgeted works where collective large scale shoring and re-engineering works are required. Revenue funding for these works is not permitted.
- 3.2 Application for capital funding is made on the best estimate of the costs available at the time. There will be built into the funding a percentage of contingency which may not be utilised. Under these circumstances it is logical to use any remaining funds to affect partial or emergency repairs elsewhere in the waterways to those areas identified but not otherwise funded.
- 3.3 The dynamics of the waterways and its susceptibility to weather and seasonal influences tend to result in the need to respond quickly with a civil engineering response, especially to the canal.

**4 What are the resource implications including non financial resources.**

- 4.1 No adverse resource implications. The recommendation will permit the better and most effective use of already assigned resources.

## **5 Section 151 Officer comments:**

- 5.1 As the Funds are capital, they may only be used for schemes that add substantial value and /or life to the asset. Therefore the schemes must cover significant structural enhancement of the canal and not traditional repairs and maintenance. If the works were found to be repairs rather than structural improvements, then the costs would fall on the revenue budget.

## **6 What are the legal aspects?**

## **7 Monitoring Officer's comments:**

- 7.1 So that a full audit trail of capital expenditure is maintained, it is suggested that details of the use of any underspend in approved capital projects, be reported in the regular Capital Budget update reports. It is also suggested that the appropriate local member(s) be informed of any works once the decision has been taken

## **8 Report details:**

- 8.1 There is within the current capital budget an amount of £150,000 for works to the lock gates at the Turf Hotel.
- 8.2 During the preparatory process, our engineering team calculated that by taking advantage of a number of tidal anomalies during the course of the project, we could undertake the works to the outer gates without the need to construct a coffer dam on the seaward side.
- 8.3 The savings to the project cost of taking this approach could be significant and are currently estimated to be in excess of £50,000 but this figure will not be verified until the works are complete.
- 8.4 There is also capital budget approved for next year to repair the outer bank of the canal close to the M5 bridge.
- 8.5 List of currently identified priority works:
- Civil engineering works to prevent breach of the east banks above Topsham Lock
  - Civil engineering works to prevent breach of the east banks above the Turf
  - Renewal of stone work at Topsham Lock
  - Civil engineering works above Topsham Lock Cottage
  - Civil engineering works at the Bridge Road siphon
  - Civil engineering works downstream of Double Locks
  - Civil engineering works at Trenchard's Sluice
  - Rebuild overspill at Double Locks
  - Civil engineering works upstream of Double Locks
  - Renew landing stage at Double Locks
  - Civil engineering works upstream of the bird hide
  - Civil engineering works upstream of Turf
  - Topsham Quay structural repair
  - Civil engineering works at Kings Arms Sluice
  - Repair to structure of both Topsham Lock and Kings Arms bridges

8.6 The above list is not specifically covered within the current capital spending plan and as such requires Executive approval to spend existing capital funds on something closely related but not specifically identified. It is anticipated that approval of the recommendations contained in this report will enable us to group them together in a more cost effective manner and spread the financial load into the bidding period for 2016/17

**9 How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

9.1 Keeping my environment safe. Maintain our property assets and demonstrating a Well Run Council

**10 What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

10.1 There is a significant financial risk in us not identifying and managing the risk to the structure of the waterway.

**11 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?**

11.1 A breach in the canal will have a significant environmental impact

**12 Are there any other options?**

We could submit these works to the 2016/17 capital bidding process but this is not recommended because they are considered urgent priorities

**Sarah Ward, Assistant Director Public Realm**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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